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evaluative engagement both socially and historically with the by now familiar terrain of his work' and 'offers an overarching timeline for tracing the social malaise into which many of Welsh's other characters often find themselves thrown *in medias res* without historical or cultural templates for comprehending their experience' (177).

Kelly's book is interested in the material and the experiences that form the backdrop to Welsh's fiction while remaining at a critical distance from Welsh's treatment of that material. Like Welsh, class, gender and imperialism are among Kelly's main concerns, and his critique of Welsh's novels astutely attempts to negotiate between the terms in which those texts present themselves and the frequently hostile, sensationalist criticism that they have attracted so far.

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***Scotlands. Poets and the Nation.* Edited by Douglas Gifford and Alan Riach. Manchester: Carcanet, 2004. ISBN 1 85754 740 3. £9.95 pbk.**

This ambitious anthology examines the idea of Scotland as it is expressed through its poetry: 'as far as possible the poems work with the notion of a kind of *meta*-Scotland'. However, continuing a vein of thought which can be traced back to G. Gregory Smith's Caledonian antiszygy and beyond, the editors claim that Scotland's self definition is largely through its complexities: 'Scottish nationality nourishes many differences within itself'. The latter statement, in particular, is borne out by *Scotlands* contents.

Given the vast range of its contents, it is impossible here to do more than offer a listing, and a flavour, of *Scotlands*. The collection surveys well over a thousand years of poetry, starting with the anonymous and passionate 'Deirdre's Farewell to Alba', commemorating, 'that land in the east, Scotland with all its wonders'. Writers represented include people as diverse as Walter Bower, Daniel Defoe, Jean Elliot, Fergusson, Burns and Scott, Charles Murray, Hugh MacDiarmid, George Bruce, Hamish Henderson, Bashabi Fraser and Kokumo Rocks.

There are familiar pieces, such as 'Scots Wha Hae' and that extract from 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' celebrating 'my own, my native land'. However, there are also intriguing but lesser known items, like the anonymous eighteenth century piece, 'Albania': 'Loved Albania! hardy nurse of men! / Holding thy silver cross, I worship thee'. This enumerates Scotland's heritage in a singular fashion, combining the romantic leanings of a poet who can tune his 'Druid's lyre' to celebrate the economic, as well as the martial and spiritual, aspects of his nation: 'Neglect not thou the sea, that yields thee salt... / Coal such as dug from firy Elphinston'.

Fortunately, in the face of such diversity, the editors provide a helpful introductory essay, which helps the reader to navigate. Eight distinctive periods are identified. In the first, 'Scotland Emergent', including Blind Harry's 'The Wallace' and Barbour's 'The Bruce', fragments of poetry are seen to promote notions of national leadership. This is followed by 'Renaissance and Reformation' which suggests that, in the period of Henryson, Dunbar and Douglas, a vein of discussion began which focussed on 'democratic egalitarianism'. Next, 'the Union of the Crowns' argues that 'monarchy and religion' became poetic preoccupations. In the period following 'the Union of the Parliaments', it is suggested, 'angry nationalism' gave way into 'gentler sentiments of loss' regarding language and custom', exemplified by Ferguson's 'Elegy on the Death of Scots Music'. 'The Nineteenth Century' is characterised by a shift from 'mythical' and 'allegorical' concerns to 'despair and mordent humour'; 'the Scottish Literary Renaissance' (with 'simmering national awareness'), 'Post-War revival' ('inquisition' and 'dissections of the relationship between the observer of Scotland and...territory, history and identity') and, lastly, 'Towards the Third Millennium' (where national identity is seen as 'encompassing diversity and pluralism' but, equally, although, 'the idea of the nation is still there, presented across the spectrum from hope to despair'.

The nation is certainly represented in different ways and in different moods. Robert Crawford's 'Scotland' of 1990 is surprising, eloquently comparing this 'micro-nation' to the Book of Kells: 'To be miniaturised is not small-minded'. Hugh McMillan's 'Anglophobia' is rather more ambivalent in examining the 'mother's milk' of national definition by opposition:

I remember my Grandad, seventy five
and ridged with nicotine, sitting, grimly watching
a schoolgirls' hockey match. Hands like shovels,
he'd never even seen a game with sticks
but he was bawling 'Bully up, Fiji,
get intae these English!'

Anne Frater's 'Dealachadh' ('Divorce') of 1995, too, offers a hard-headed snapshot of mid-90s politics, delivered in elegant Gaelic:

Alba àlainn
cuimhnich
air a' bhean uasal a bh' unnad,
agus bris am pòsadh seo
mus bi na trì ceud bliadhna suas.

Beautiful Alba
remember
the noble woman that you were
and end this marriage
before the three hundred years have passed.

On a more positive note, from four years later, there is the collection's closing piece, 'The Beginning of a New Song' by Ian Crichton Smith. We all remember the wonderfully assertive from the opening of the Parliament:

Let our three-voiced country
Sing in a new world
Joining the other rivers without dogma,
But with friendliness to all around us.

Taken as a whole, this collection is a resonant introduction to diverse responses to Scotland. It should be essential reading for those seeking to understand the changing context of identities within the United Kingdom. Equally, it is a wonderful study and teaching resource.

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***Scotland Resurgent.* By Paul Henderson Scott. Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 2003. ISBN 0 854110 83 6. £9.99 pbk.**

Scotland Resurgent is a collection of Paul Scott's 'state of the nation' essays, which, like earlier collections, range over cultural, political, literary and personal matters. Despite its title, however, a large part of the book deals with the past, with essays going back over twenty-five years which appear to have neither been revisited with a retrospect nor revised, though much has changed in the interim, no small thanks due to Paul Scott himself. Literary essays form a large part of the book, and while they are lively and polemical, they do not engage with critical debates, some of the parameters of which have changed markedly. It came as a pleasant surprise to myself as editor to see material from *Scottish Studies Review* reproduced in the book. There are some typos: e.g. the Aberdeen History of Scottish Literature came out in 1987-8, not 1998 (98).

The fourth and fifth sections, on cultural campaigns and campaigns for a parliament and independence are much the strongest. Here the author has been part of the history he records, and although inevitably sometimes partial and polemical, these essays form an impressive credo as well as a record of personal achievement. With Paul Scott's great strengths in politics and public affairs, this is no surprise: and it is these essays which provide the important part of the book.

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